# CyberLink PowerDVD 6 Deluxe

**PowerDVD 6 Deluxe**
$49.95, Standard; $69.95, Deluxe
CyberLink
www.gocyberlink.com

PowerDVD 6 lets you make the most of surround sound speakers and widescreen monitors for a home movie experience, but if you have an average PC setup (two speakers and a plain-Jane monitor), there's not much noticeable improvement over version 5. (See the October 2003 *CPU*, page 67, for our review.)

Version 6 doesn't add many new features. The UI is almost identical to version 5, but the app does support a slew of new audio and video specs, however, which can enhance your movie watching experience if you have the hardware. CLMEI-2, for example, expands two- or six-channel audio up to eight channels, and MLP Lossless supports lossless six-channel DVD-encoded audio. Those features sound promising, but on my PC connected to two standard speakers (and later, headphones), there was no discernable difference. CLEV-2 is purported to adjust a scene's chroma and luminance to enhance image detail. In my tests using various DVDs and a 19-inch CRT, however, many scenes were darker than I would have liked.

Users with average hardware probably won't notice many changes from version 5, but they will get a smooth, feature-filled home theater experience. Smart aspect-ratio settings let you watch widescreen movies on standard monitors and vice versa, digital zoom provides a close-up of any screen portion, and you can fast forward through a scene with audio at normal pitch.

Version 6 adds the ability to play DVD-Audio, and a equalizer can instantly switch between such presets as acoustic, techno, and country. This is useful for concert videos or audio, but not so much for most movie watching. Also new are optional enhancement packs, such as compression formats, that extend functionality. A $20 Mobility Pack for extending DVD viewing time on battery-powered laptops by 20 to 30% will interest mobile users.

The app requires Windows Me/2000/XP, and a 2GHz or faster CPU is recommended. (I tested with an Athlon XP 3000+.) The app is worthy for movie enthusiasts, but if you are not a videophile, there's little reason to upgrade. ▲

**by Kevin Savetz**

# Electric Pocket Busker MP3 Player

**Busker MP3 Player**
$19.95
Electric Pocket
www.electricpocket.com

Busker is a music player for Palm OS smartphones and PDAs that plays MP3, WAV, and Ogg files. At startup, Busker defaults to Artist view, showing a list of the artists on your memory card. It recognizes subfolders, so if your music files are already organized by album, you won't need to set up playlists. The UI includes large controls that you can access by finger or stylus.

QuickMix lets you select a random list of 15 songs that will start playing immediately with a single tap. Similar to iPod's shuffle feature, QuickMix is great if you aren't sure what you want to hear. The program also lets you mark favorite songs by tapping on a star in the menu bar. You can then play these songs quickly via the Favorites option from the menu. In addition, Busker tracks the most recently played and most often played songs, and you can play music in the background while you work, although if you want to skip a song, you have to return to Busker, as there are no pop-up controls available.

When playing a song, Busker's screen splits into two halves. The top half shows the song list, and the bottom provides detailed information about a highlighted song (song length, remaining and elapsed time, etc.). Tapping on the progress bar takes you immediately to the point in the song at which you tapped, working as a precise fast-forward or reverse function. Controls at the screen's bottom let you play, pause, and move to the previous or next track. A green arrow on the left takes you back to the main screen, while a yellow headphone icon serves as the volume control. You can also display album art, and palmOne Treo users can find and download album art wirelessly.

Busker requires less than 500KB of memory on your Palm OS device, and the software's $19.95 price compares favorably to similar products. A free trial is available. ▲

**by Jen Edwards**

CPU Ranking: 0 = Absolutely Worthless 2.5 = Absolutely Average 5 = Absolutely Perfect